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## THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

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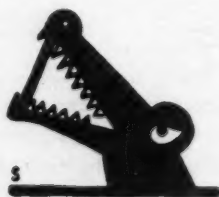
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# Sergei Obraztsov

Inna Soloviova

Theater Critic

Courtesy of U.S.S.R.

Illustrated Monthly.

His thin hand holding onto the tip, a foppish little devil sits swaying on the half-moon.

A broad-brimmed hat with a feather in it, high boots, and luxuriant whiskers—of course, it's Puss in Boots!

The little wooden boy with the pointed nose hurries about his business, a magic key clutched in his hand.

A gold carriage floats across the dark sky. It is taking Cinderella to the ball.

Every Muscovite knows that these posters are an invitation from Obraztsov or, to be more exact, the Central Puppet Theater, which Sergei Obraztsov heads.

Puppet theaters are very old. Puppets were found in excavations of the pyramids; their amusing antics called forth laughter in ancient Rome; the English Punch, the German Kasperle, the French Polichinelle and the Russian Petrushka all stuck their long noses into the affairs of our great-grandfathers. Obraztsov's puppet theater is very young because, although he has gratefully accepted the legacy left him by his gay, estimable predecessors, he has, in actuality, created a new and interesting art.

His is not a revival of the old Russian puppet performances. Obraztsov has a prejudice against any sort of stylization. Nor is it an imitation of the real theater. Obraztsov insists that there is no point in puppets' attempting plays which ordinary actors can do with success. Obraztsov's art and his theater are very independent. They copy no one, and are full of surprises.

The element of surprise is not only an integral part of Obraztsov's talent, it is also a feature of his biography.

Could one have expected that the son of a famous scientist, an academician who headed the Soviet school of transport engineers, would choose such a light-hearted occupation and devote his life to "playing with puppets"? Or could one have expected that puppets would bring Obraztsov the Younger world fame?

Least of all did Sergei Obraztsov himself expect that. True, he chose art as his field early in life, when he took up painting. It was in his student years that he and his friends thought up the idea of making some hand puppets for sale like those which he had once had in his childhood. Obraztsov's first puppet was a little Negro boy made out of a black stocking. The remains of a karakul collar went for the hair, and shoe buttons for eyes. Obraztsov never dreamed of the role that Negro boy would play in his life.

The friends did not sell their puppets, perhaps because they could find no buyers, but more likely because it seemed a pity to part with those "amusing kids," with whom one could have so much fun.

The Negro boy settled down in the pocket of Obraztsov's jacket. From time to time he would climb out, on the street, and beguile passersby asking the way to Krivokolenny Lane. He acquired quite a repertory. He could sing Tchaikovsky's "Amidst the Noisy Ball" in a sentimental manner that was excruciatingly funny. With his partner, an old peasant woman in a kerchief, he sang "When You and I Sat by the Murmuring Stream." Then the old woman would turn her back on him, dress up in a silk gown and fancy headdress, and sing a duet with a

melancholy, long-haired professor who wore starched cuffs that creaked. They sang a song that was extremely popular at the time "I Remember the Day," in such an amusing manner that those who might have sighed over it before now laughed at its sentimentality.

That was the first evidence of Obraztsov's penchant for parody, something that would later become an innate part of his art.

Obraztsov's crowd of art student friends loved his puppets. Home puppet performances grew more and more frequent, with both actors and audiences enjoying themselves tremendously.

Still and all, puppets were merely a hobby. Life had its more serious side. Obraztsov dropped painting and took up acting, first at the Music Theater under Nemirovich-Danchenko (Obraztsov has a very pleasant tenor), and then at the studio of the Art Theater. He was fairly successful, and one would have thought there would be no room for puppets in his new life. But, again surprisingly, his enthusiasm for puppets did not wane.

"My love affair with my puppets began without my realizing it," says Obraztsov. "Just like many love affairs in real life, first two people meet and find it is very pleasant to talk together. Then comes the desire to meet more frequently. The meetings become a necessity, and the separations seem endless. That is love. Then the periods of separation stop altogether, and the meetings merge into the stream of life. That is marriage.

"That is what happened to me. First I enjoyed 'chattering' with my puppets. Then the subjects of our 'talks' grew broader, and our separations less frequent, until we found it was love. After that the separations ceased, marriage began; that is, a profession arose."

Obraztsov has created a new type of variety show: songs by puppets. Most

of his singers are satirical personages. You laugh at the lack of taste contained either in the song that is parodied or in the vulgar manner in which it is sung. Among Obraztsov's singers there is Carmen, exaggerating her impossible "Gypsy" passion; the "public idol," a baritone with diamond cuff-links who stretches out his neck all of a foot when he takes his high notes; and the lady singer who rolls her eyes and wrings her hands in a paroxysm of lyrical agitation (this gesture is all the more amusing in that the hands are "real," they are Obraztsov's).

Songs by puppets proved a tremendous success. But the better Obraztsov got to know his puppets, the more he realized that his concert numbers allowed them to show only a fraction of what they were capable of doing.

Puppets are born to act. Their place is in the theater. That they can be more than bold parodists Obraztsov had already discovered. There was his number "The Tiger Tamer," for one, where he pokes fun at the way the circus trades in danger.

Puppets can be moving, and they can be lyrical. Nor is there any need to conceal that they are puppets. In his lullaby with the puppet Tyapa, Obraztsov does not use a screen but sings before the public with the puppet on his right hand. Tyapa keeps turning his funny little head as he examines the audience. He wears a white vest buttoned at the top in back. Where the vest parts you can see the back of the operator's hand, representing the baby's bare back. Here there is no pretense that the puppet is a real baby. But when Obraztsov succeeds in putting to sleep that restless creature who rolls his eyes, sticks his finger in "papa's" mouth and prevents him from singing, sucks on his pacifier or on "papa's" finger, when at last Tyapa falls asleep, and Obraztsov carefully removes the puppet from his hand and takes it behind the screen, the audience does not break into

applause. It might wake Tyapa.

Besides laughter, a puppet, it turned out, could also call forth tenderness.

It goes without saying that puppets have no parallel when it comes to the world of fantasy. Where can wonders be more natural than in a puppet theater?

Puppets, Obratsov suspected, could also play in a biting satire, or a lyrical comedy, or even in a production in the heroic manner. He was filled with the desire to prove it.

The opportunity to do so came in 1932, when it was proposed that he head a puppet theater for children. Obratsov accepted.

He found people for his company who were equally enthusiastic about tackling such a new and intriguing job. If you want to meet real enthusiasts, get acquainted with the members of Obratsov's troupe. They are wonderful people, a little bit mad, like all who are in love. And they really are in love with their remarkably jolly art.

The theater was established for children, but it soon exceeded age boundaries. Adults discovered the theater and adopted it for their own, and the puppets learned to stage satires with as much success as they did fairy tales. They learned to be both poetic and heroic. The fairy-tale love of Aladdin for Budur is presented with inimitable charm. Nor do the noble, generous characters in Gozzi's romantic fairy play, "Stag King," lose anything for being played by wooden actors.

Here I should say something of the great contribution that the change in the technique of operating puppets has made. Puppets on sticks, whose movements are much more natural than the movements of marionettes and hand puppets, appeared at the Obratsov theater. (Puppets on sticks have long been popular in the East, but were not used before in the European theater.)

Muscovites are not the only ones who have enjoyed the Obratsov productions. Puppets are by nature

wanderers. They are prepared at a moment's notice to set off to roam the world. The Obratsov theater has not forgotten that tradition. It has been applauded in Teheran, Sofia, Prague, London and dozens of cities in China.

Puppet performances are almost as easy to understand as the ballet. One does not need to know the language. Thousands of people abroad who have seen Obratsov's puppets realize that. The British, for example, who certainly cannot be accused of being effusive, were filled with praise for Moscow's puppeteers. "Sergei Obratsov is undoubtedly a genius in his art," declared the *Morning Advertiser*, while *Time* and *Tide* added, "a genius down to his fingertips."

The surprises do not end here. They actually only begin. Obratsov is experimenting. He may be accused of inconsistency, for sometimes he tries to make his puppets do today what he declared yesterday they should not do. He has long been interested in the problem of whether puppets can act in serious contemporary drama, in a modern play that does not ridicule but has a positive message. Before, he felt that puppets could not handle a modern plot, that with their inclination toward parody they could not play really heroic roles. Lately, however, he has been staging more and more productions in which puppets theoretically have no business. The characters in "Two to Nothing in Our Favor," "He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not," and "Divorce Case" are pleasant, ordinary people, the kind we all know, college students, researchers, athletes. Those are completely "human" plays.

Inconsistency? Probably the only consistent people are those who stand still. Obratsov and his theater, however, are constantly on the move.

What the theater will be like in the future is hard to say. After all, Obratsov is a man of art. And art is always full of surprises.

# Puppet Theater in Rumania

Margareta Niculescu, Director  
Of the Tandarica Puppet Theater  
Bucharest

Long ago, notwithstanding the deafening noise of fairs, one could hear the puppet player's voice calling the crowd of peasants and merchants to look at his puppets.—Puppets, wordly puppets stop and look at them!—shouted he and at once people interrupted their occupations and left their stalls and hurried to look at the puppet show.

When the player started the performance animating his puppets made of rags and wood and carved with the knife, the assistance burst out in laughter and the joy seemed not to stop. For the rest, laughter is often the artists only reward as more than once the gendarme's appearance interrupts the performance and scatters the crowd.

Persecuted for the social implications of his jokes, the popular artist, dear to crowds, wanders from towns to villages stopping at fairs and weddings to show his puppets, which are cherished by many and feared by some.

The image of the puppet player wearing on his back a basket with puppets, and under his arms a box which will represent the stage is linked to many centuries of popular tradition.

Influenced by Karaghioz and Petrushka, Rumanian popular puppetry was mainly satirical.

Over 33 characters climbed on the small stage, reflecting the manners of the time. Vasilache, the hero of the popular comedy enjoyed wide popularity.

The period covering the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th can be considered as one of intense development of puppetry art. At the beginning of last century, when a national theatre did not exist, the poet

Costache Conachi (1777-1848) wrote plays for puppets. In the classical comedies of Vasile Alecsandri the puppet player was an important feature. In those times such puppet players' name as Ion Hanganul became famous. Unfortunately in the second half of the XIXth century some drastic laws—against which representatives of Rumanian culture like Ion Creanga and Mihail Kogalniceanu have struggled—brutally interrupted the tradition of puppets plays. Puppet players reappear only at the beginning of our century at fairs, but their art lacked in brilliancy and satirical vigour.

The modern puppet theatre appears in our country after the first world war. The example of Dr. Vittorio Podrecca, of profesor Josef Skupa and of Serghei Obraztsov infused new life into the European puppet theatre, inspired the work of some passionate amateurs such as prof. Teodor Nastase, the painters Ioana Basarab and G. Lowendal, the stage director Victor Ion Popa and Lucia Calomeri (guided by Dr. Jan Malik).

They put up fine programmes in which Moliere and the Grimm Brothers were duely represented. Getting no support from the authorities and having to face great financial difficulties, their activity could only be an intermittent one and did not last for long.

Without keeping up the tradition of the popular puppet plays and leaving no other inheritance than their passion for puppetry, this generation established an historic link between the popular theatre and the present era.

In 1949 the Tandarica theatre, set up in 1945 by a group of enthusiasts under the leadership of Lucia Calomeri



—becomes a State Theater. This was only the beginning of a vast action of encouraging and developing puppetry in our country. There are today 20 professional theaters and many amateur groups.

Heir of the tradition of puppet playing only in the sense of satisfying the people's aspirations, paying due respect to the achievements and experience of European theaters with old tradition—the Rumanian puppet theater struggles for a national profile. In addition to the old Tandarica theater, theatrical ensembles, each with its specific form of creation and its artistic language, came into being in Tg. Mures, Oradea, Iasi, Cluj and Craiova.

Having, in the first years, to struggle against the existing prejudice of the minor art, in our country puppetry succeeded to be recognized and to become an art capable of embodying and transmitting the noblest ideas as well as men's most valuable virtues.

Over 600 performances are given yearly by Tandarica before a public of more than 150,000 spectators. This is proof of the love and popularity which our puppet theater enjoys among chil-

dren and grown ups. As a result of its high artistic level, which is also a cause of it, our puppet theater may be proud of the first successes obtained by the original puppet playwriting with: *The Pig's Story* by Veronica Porumbacu and *Viorica Filipoiu* after *Ion Creanga*, *Brethren Liu* by *Al. Popovici*, *Snow White* by *Magdalena Manolescu* after the *Grimm Brothers*, *Marinica* and the *Golden Apple*, by *Costel Popovici*.

The Rumanian puppet players, younger members of the old and great family of puppet players, will on the occasion of the International Festival of Puppet Theaters have the pleasure to see their ardent wish of establishing a close friendship with artists all over the world come true. This Festival is an expression of the great esteem and admiration which artists and Rumanian cultural personalities feel for the art of other nations, it is the expression of their wish to become acquainted and cherish the valuable creations of so many other nations.

May is in Bucharest the month of spring, the month of youth and the puppet players' Festival will be a holiday of our ever flourishing art.

## Marionette Theater of Braunschweig

Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin

On Saturday, January 25, 1958, this company from Germany presented two shows at the Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium as part of the Paul McPharlin Memorial Conference. The shows were designed and directed by Harro Siegel, who was also one of the operators, with Marie Elizabeth Sanner, Adelheid Siegel, Wolfgang Manthey and Beate Goller. It took one person, Rudolf Knapmann, to manage the light and sound, while two others, Diether Ebbeke and Hes Horst Zeisig, took care of the stage mechanics. The

English adaptations of the plays were made by Dorothy M. C. Warner. In the morning a large audience of children and adults saw "Tee and Hapshisoot" or "The Philosopher's Stone," an Egyptian story. The evening audience, composed largely of adults, saw "Dr. Faust" and "Comic Interludes."

The Braunschweig troupe was well organized. The stage was large and spacious to accommodate the larger-than-average marionettes which were seen in settings distinguished by good design and lighting. Excellent sound

equipment projected the taped dialogue, music, and an unusually rich pattern of sound effects. These were elaborate shows, but there were enough people to handle them smoothly.

Seeing all this technical equipment, one wondered if the dramatic presentation would equal it. Would the story come through with a strong impact, or would it be obscured by too much awareness of the puppet actors as puppets? It was good to find that for the most part the story dominated. Both plays, as well as the variety numbers, were built upon the kind of material in which puppets excel. American audiences are so prone to consider puppets as essentially humorous, that plays with substance may not at once be fully appreciated. It was unfortunate, as Herb Scheffel pointed out (see *Journal*, Jan. - Feb.) that "Dr. Faust" was given in New York for children, which happened because Mr. Siegel was not told that he was to play at the Phoenix for a child audience. Yet the children in Detroit who saw "The Philosopher's Stone" were far more attentive than they have been for some performances supposedly geared to childish taste, and despite the fact that these audiences are hopelessly mixed in age level from five years up.

The plot of "The Philosopher's Stone" is based on the old tried and true hero-overcoming-obstacles pattern. Tee, a young poet, loves the Princess who returns his feeling, but he is poor and her father, the Pharaoh, demands a wealthy son-in-law. Aided by advice from his father, who appears as a mummy, and Mopsus, his fat and jolly servant, Tee manages to gain entry to the King's own treasure house from which he takes away a number of jars full of money. Naturally the Pharaoh is upset by the disappearance of the jars, and he sets various traps to catch the thief. Mopsus is lowered into the room from a trap door in the roof, only to be confronted by a lion

who cannot quite catch him. Another time there is a huge tub of alcohol into which Mopsus drops, but he is undaunted because he has the capacity of a wine vat. So the jars continue to disappear. The Pharaoh, by now feeling rather poverty stricken, proclaims his willingness to accept a son-in-law provided he is wealthy enough. Three suitors appear in turn; they are rich but not rich enough, so they are beheaded by the executioner, and the heads placed in a neat row downstage. Our hero is then admitted, and his wealth is so great even the king is satisfied and he wins the princess. A subplot culminates in the winning of the princess' maid, Tata, by Mopsus and all ends happily.

There was excellent action throughout, and the beauty of the scenery and costumes helped to hold the audience's attention. An especially puppet-like bit was the entrance of the mummy, which floated in horizontally and out again several times before it was persuaded to stand still in a vertical position and give advice. Only a puppet could have been such a wonderful lion, and there was also a crocodile which swallowed his victim. A fine bit of technical dexterity was the raising of the treasure vases through the roof. A looped rope was lowered, Mopsus slipped it over the neck of the vessel which was easily pulled up. Experienced puppeteers in the audience felt that fate was being tempted when this action was repeated six times, but it never failed!

The story of Dr. Faust, though far more serious, is also essentially puppet material, even though the conflict is largely a mental one in which the doctor matches wits with the devil and loses in the end. Casper (in this version called Jack Sausage,) also has something of a struggle, but it is on a physical plane, and simplified because he has no soul and little wit, hence he is not fair spoil for the devil's work. Ironically, he escapes, while



Faust descends to Hell, pulled down by huge hands reaching up from a glowing abyss. Some of the effects which have always made "Faust" a favorite puppet play were Charon drifting in his boat in the Underworld, the assorted devils appearing and disappearing at a magic word, Casper riding off to Parma on an airborne monster, the apparition of Helen of Troy, the transformation of Faust from an old man to a poetic looking young man amid a great burst of red fire.

Dramatically, the story did not completely enlist the sympathy of the audience in Faust's struggle. Perhaps this was because there was so much to look at that one did not give enough attention to the lines in which he disclosed his dissatisfaction with learning, and later, his disappointment in the worldly joys to which he had looked forward with so much anticipation. Thus one was very sorry when, at the end, he was doomed to Hell. On the other hand, there were delightful scenes, such as his conversation with the Duchess of Parma, and exciting ones such as the business in the magic circle when he is confronted by the horrible demons.

One of the most difficult problems confronting the puppet producer is to create an illusion of reality and maintain it throughout the play. No matter how improbable or fantastic, everything which is seen and done on the puppet stage should be real to the audience. This illusion is a fragile thing which can be broken in many ways. One of these is a sudden diversion from the story to the puppet and what he is doing, by something which calls attention to the puppet or the mechanics of manipulation. There were a few such moments in the Braunschweig performances. The Princess' boat in the Egyptian play was kept constantly in motion, rocking up and down although it was supposed to be floating quietly in one spot. Two of the rich suitors, one very tall and

thin, the other very short and squat, were followed by one so extremely fat that this fatness called so much attention to the puppet that he was for a moment "out of the story" and one was too aware of the puppetishness of the actor. The marionettes sometimes lacked force and speed of movement, because the delicacy of their articulation demanded such careful control; one wished at times that they could be moved with the freedom of rod or hand puppets. The general stylistic quality of the marionettes was clear-cut and strong exaggeration for the most part, but occasionally the form of a figure was lost. One of the devils, Auerhahn, seemed overloaded with feathers, while Tata, the Princess' maid, did not come over as a clear design. And, as noted above, exaggeration went just a shade too far in the case of the fat suitor.

But these are minor flaws in these productions which were a joy to see because they were so beautifully designed. The settings were simple, pictorially pleasing, and achieved a sense of atmosphere with a minimum of detail, plus skillful lighting. Moreover, the shows had balance — play, decor, and puppets were all fused into a harmonious whole. The music and sound effects were especially well done, and contributed atmosphere without being obtrusive. At times a sound carried along the action, as when the Egyptian executioner paused in his work to sharpen his knife on a stone which whined successively in three different pitches! It was indeed good to see shows in which the audience could become absorbed in substantial stories, told with adequate action and enriched with fine visual and auditory effects. Finally, we were given a real theatrical experience, one which did not depend upon puppet tricks for their own sake, but took advantage of them because they were legitimate "business" in the action of the plays.

American puppeteers can no longer troupe such elaborate productions — at least it has been many years since we have seen anything comparable in the way of a touring company. But we should not despair. Harro Siegel has created a kind of production which is his own; now we must do as he has done — search for fundamental principles and build our own interpretations upon them. Instead of trying to imitate this work, rather we should each say, "Now he has done it this way —

I will do it another way." For there are as many possibilities for creative work in simplicity as in elaboration, with hand-puppets as well as marionettes, for children as much as for adult audiences. Let each puppet producer make his own interpretation in terms of good dramatic structure, adequate technical equipment, and good design in the puppets, the scenery and the manipulation so that the show gets over to the audience as a balanced, organic whole.

## Unima

Romain Proctor

American puppeteers will be glad to learn of the rebirth of UNIMA ("Union International des Marionnettes" — or in English translation "The International Puppeteers Organization"). UNIMA was founded in 1929, with members from fourteen countries, and played a most important roll in the great puppet renaissance which swept the world. It held international congresses of puppeteers and published puppet books and periodicals. In the company of many artistic and cultural groups, UNIMA became a casualty of social forces and of World War II.

This Autumn, Prof. Dr. Jan Malik, as General Secretary, sent a call to puppeteers all over the world. A convention was held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, fourth through fourteenth of December 1957. 129 people from seventeen countries attended. Happily there was little language problem, as the delegates used earphones and there were interpreters to speak in French, English, German, Czech and Russian.

Gerald Morice, who represented the British Puppet Guild and the Educational Puppetry Association writes, "The Congress was a tremendous positive success. UNIMA lives again, awakened from its long involuntary sleep. I believe that this, our Inter-

national Puppeteers Organization, will continue to live and flourish. The roots (to vary and mix the metaphor) have been well and truly relaid — and with no political strings attached. Politics in no way had any part in our deliberations. We, representing the nations, met in an atmosphere of good will and were, I think, filled with good will, without exception. UNIMA re-established is, however, only the beginning and we must continue to build. We have made the start, now we climb. Immediate steps include the publication of a multi-lingual journal at regular intervals, and approach to UNESCO with a view to membership, and an attempt to increase the exchange of companies and individuals." These aims coincide with the best thinking in this country.

The delegates drafted a constitution. The Preamble reads: UNIMA shall associate puppeteers of the whole world who consider the puppet theatre to be an art leading to the hearts of both children and adults and thus to the hearts of the people. Through their art UNIMA members of all countries want to serve peace through out the world.

The following officers were elected: President, Max Jacob, Hamburg,

Germany;

Vice Presidents, Sergei Obratsov, Moscow, U.S.S.R., and Dr. Vittorio Podrecca, Rome, Italy;

General Secretary, Prof. Dr. Jan Malik, Prague, Czechoslovakia;

Executive Committee, Mrs. Meher Rustom Contractor, Ahmedabad, India, Rudolf Hahlbohm, Berlin, Germany, Doc. Dr. Erik Kolar, Prague, Czechoslovakia, Gerald Morice, Malvern, England, Mrs. Margarete Niculescu, Bucharest, Romania, Jose Pengov, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, Romain Proctor, Springfield, Ill., U.S.A., Dr. Hans R. Purschke, Frankfurt A-M, Germany, Henryk Ryl, Lodz, Poland, and Jean Loup Temporal,

Paris, France.

The next meeting of UNIMA will be held during the International Festival of Doll and Puppet Theatres in Bucharest, May fifteenth through June first 1958. The 1959 Congress will be held in Paris.

American puppeteers and puppet groups are invited to join UNIMA. The admission of members shall be decided upon by the Executive Committee. Romain Proctor is working on a plan for a clearing house through which Americans can join, participate, receive benefits (such as publications etc.) and pay dues. He will welcome your inquiries and suggestions.

## Paris Label

Herb Scheffel

"Professor" Frank Paris, of the New York University faculty, presented his puppetry workshop students in another of their end-of-semester variety shows MARDI GRAS (an all hand puppet revue) at the American Room, 2 Washington Square North, on a wet stormy night, January 21st.

Many professional puppeteers and assorted puppet enthusiasts in the audience that night, later admitted they hadn't been moved by such inventive bits of originality and charm or to such belly laughs at a puppet entertainment, in years. These students, who seem to move where professionals fear to tread (the opposite direction from slick artificiality and commercial repetition), kept the audience in such high spirits, that it was hard to draw the line between beginner and professional at times—both sides of the puppet booth were having a whale of a good time.

It was a fresh show, a pot-pouri of vaudeville, satirical sketches, moods and high color design. There were technical accidents, sure, as at any sort of student "recital"—but with the

advantage of puppets, and some brilliant bits of ad libbing, the show was only pushed into higher amusing gear, as a result. Combining all these, and the informality of the evening, the result was very close to the real spirit of puppetry—everyone, puppeteers, puppets, audience—had a good time.

Here was wild and some mild experimentation, charm, sophisticated humor, childlike humor, mystery, movements in dance—in fact a real grab bag of ever changing new approaches and twists to MATERIAL—which was the main springboard of the show.

"Prof." Paris can be proud of what he has instilled in this new crop of students—and what he discovered lying dormant within them. The Paris Label of extravagant theatrical craftsmanship and design was evident from opening curtain to finale. And the University's course in puppetry, Division of General Education and Extension Services (write there, Washington Square, New York 3, N. Y., for catalogue of courses)\* should become

(Continued on page 21)



## PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

VIVIAN MICHAEL

### OBRATZSOV

We are indebted to the USSR ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY for the article on Obratsov and for the pictures reproduced here. We regret that we could not reproduce the color pictures sent us, they were wonderful examples of this artist's work. . . in addition to being unusually fine photography.

Obratsov's recent book (see last JOURNAL) is said to be the best thing on Russian Puppetry since the translation of Nina Efimova's ADVENTURES OF A RUSSIAN PUPPET THEATRE, which many of you probably own.

### THE SHIRLEYS

Along with some new brochures, letter heads etc, we received this photograph and a letter from John Shirley. John says: "Bonnie (Dale) and I were married at Sioux Falls, S. Dakota on February 6, between shows in the Coliseum. A real actor's wedding, with eight acts, a seven piece band and assorted stage hands attending the wedding and the reception back stage." Bonnie has been John's partner on their "Original Floor Show on Strings" act which is well known through the midwest.

Congratulations and best wishes!

### RAY & DON

Ray and Don Grant, of Pasco, Washington, two enterprising teen agers operate under the name of "Grant Brothers Magic Marionettes, and form a most efficient partnership . . . Ray turns out the marionettes, writes the scripts and directs the show. . . Don is the business manager, booker and

stage manager.

Losing all but three of their fifty marionettes in a fire at their home only created new enthusiasm and the cast is fast taking on its former proportions. Bingo and Topple, the two clowns are favorites with the small fry . . . Rock and Roll, Jitterbugger, and like creations are favored by the teen agers.

In addition to a weekly TV show KEPR-TV, the boys are kept busy with school, park and department store productions.

### FAIRYLAND

Up and at it again! After a most successful first year exhibit, the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteer's Guild, Children's Fairyland, Lakeside Park, Oakland, California, held an even more successful "Second Annual Puppet Fair," during the month of September.

Joan Cruikshank acts as guide in the section where puppets by Jack and Elva Aikem, Tony Urbano, Lewis Mahlmann and Pat Whitehill's puppets are displayed.

We have always heard that there is "strength in numbers." The California groups are certainly proving that with the active organizations that have been springing up like mushrooms the last few years. How about getting your local group organized?

### NANCY COLE

Nancy Cole writes: "After teaching and doing puppets in the L. A. area, I've opened my studio in Palo Alto and am pursuing the puppet business as a full time occupation. So far both bookings and the little faces out front



OBRATZSOV



the Shirleys





Ray and Don



Wilbur and he



the GIANT



Fairyland



Nancy Cole



by David Nixon



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have been very encouraging.

"I receive my M. A. from Stanford University this spring, with my thesis on GUIGNOL finally complete, and accepted.

"In the fall I hope to go to Europe . . . I AM GOING if I have to walk the waters! And you know what happens when a puppeteer gets determined."

And here is Nancy's plea to you who have been abroad or who have puppeteer friends abroad. Can you advise her whom to see and furnish her names and addresses? She hopes to spend several months abroad. If so, please write Nancy. (See directory)

### BY DAVID NIXON

La Causerie Francaise brought a "first" to the Carmel, California Playhouse with the presentation of David Nixon's premiere production of George Courteline's "Hortense, Couche-Tole" in its original French.

Mr. Nixon also presented an original piece, "Sideshow" which will have its premiere in New Orleans. "Sideshow" introduces all the fascinating stars of the Carnival . . . from bearded lady to sword swallower. Mr. Nixon will soon return to New Orleans, a French speaking vicinity, where he will re-

open his well known puppet theater, now leased to a "theater in the round."

### WILBUR AND THE GIANT

We'd like to have space for the excellent brochure which George Latshaw sent along with these photos of Wilbur and the Giant. There is little new that we can tell you about George Latshaw . . . every one is familiar with his productions . . . we could tell you a secret about George . . . but we really should leave that announcement to a lovely young lady . . . SO . . . we will talk about brochures instead. Many of them come the way of the JOURNAL office . . . some fascinating, exciting and professional looking. Once in a while we get one that is sadly in need of an "overhaul." Although puppeteers are rated as the world's most versatile (you have to be a puppeteer) it is often wise to get some professional help with your brochures. They represent you . . . they sell your show . . . they are often all your client has to judge your show by. Don't be too sure of yourself . . . spend a few dollars for professional advice . . . it will pay dividends galore. (Not a paid ad.)

### PARIS LABEL (Continued)

(Continued from page 11)  
ever so popular with each semester. The course is taught evenings at "Prof." Paris' studio, 12 Gay Street, New York City.

With constant performing and tightening up of the sketches—four standout numbers could certainly make the professional grade. Lydia Ressler took an old Dorothy Parker monologue and worked it around two ridiculous caricatures on a dance floor; Mary Duane Hoffman spoofed the magic dust off RAPUNZEL, until the pro puppeteers in the audience broke up; Leatrice Lawrence showed a great gift for

breathing character into an inanimate puppet body—the GREAT quality needed by a puppet showman. Her Signor Stromboli, mentalist, is a gem in both voice and figure projection; Alice May Hall's miniature Arabian Nights extravaganza created a spell-binding mood (OH—those hushed moments of concentration out front) that even over rode a technical mishap. But it was a sympathetic, hypnotized audience and the spell Miss Adams created was too great to be concerned over a wobbling bit of scenery.

Ted Taylor and his silent monkey engaged in jungle magic, incorporating

audience participation and ad libs; Helen M. Hartung presented a couple of Hansel and Gretel duets; Evelyn Wickham showed her team Julep and Haze in a short skit; Gladys Reiner did the speech lesson from "My Fair Lady" and Nina Mancuso toyed around with a bit concerning a Parisian pianist and a gorgeous lady piano tuner. A bevy of a dozen assorted, high designed clowns opened the revue and a colorful calypso grand finale wound up the recital, led by May Waldman and the

company.

These students have a good start, and a basic knowledge of what good puppet entertainment was and could be again without imitation, with fresh material and original design, to create laughter and make believe. And their recitals are becoming well known too, at the end of each semester. The previous class presented it's recital through the medium of marionettes.

BRAVO—Herr Professor Paris!

\* (Ed. note: not a paid advertisement!)

## Billy the Kid

After a year of preparation, the pageant of the Old West and the saga of Billy the Kid will appear on the stage of Ford Auditorium on March 15 and April 5 when the Detroit Puppet Theatre will join the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Valter Poole.

This is a culmination of a dream, born some three years ago then symphony officials and Edgar P. Richardson, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, first considered a production of the Detroit Puppet Theatre with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. At that time, the puppet program, which is presented by the Institute, was only a year old and already on its way to becoming a leader in the puppet theatre field in America.

Preliminary meetings for this unusual venture took place last spring when Howard Harrington, Jim Hicks and Valter Poole met with Richardson, Gil Oden, Curator of Theatre Arts at the Institute and director of the puppet program, and George Latshaw, professional puppeteer of Akron, Ohio, who was to direct the production. At that time Aaron Copland's ballet suite, "Billy the Kid", was chosen for these performances for the inherent dramatic values in the music and for its spirited interpretation of early Western themes.

Later, Latshaw, who has designed as well as directed the production, visited the Southwest where William "Billy the Kid" Bonney's career with a gun became legend. He visited the Lincoln County jail in New Mexico where Billy was held by Sheriff Pat Garrett, and from which "The Kid" made his dramatic escape. The building, now restored and serving as a museum, began to conjure up the colorful past for the artist. The town, which is largely untouched, with dirt sidewalks and adobe buildings, seemed remote from our modern world of gas stations and neon signs, but as Latshaw says, "It looked as if it might have been waiting for Billy to ride into town once again." As a good luck charm for the production, he brought one of the iron nails from the original jail.

The story of the puppet production is based on Sheriff Pat Garrett's account of the life and times of Billy, written in the florid style of the period. Although there naturally are similarities between the puppet production and the well known ballet created on this story of the Old West, Latshaw and Oden are quick to point out that this production is not the ballet, which is for dancers, but a full scale mime production for puppets. The story is told

through the music and movement of the puppets and represents an art form in which the actions speak louder than any words. The production will reflect something of the vastness of the West with its wide open spaces and freedom of the land. Ford Auditorium offers an appropriate spaciousness for the specially designed puppets, which by their very size and design capture some of the grandeur and majesty of the West.

Because of the method of presentation, the directors felt that something special was required in the way of puppets. They wanted puppets which offered a more direct control than the conventional hand puppet or marionette because of the vigorous and varied movement suggested by the music. The results of months of deliberation, experimentation and planning was a group of puppets ranging from eight to nine feet tall. Inspired by the Japanese puppet figures of the Bunraku theatre which are three feet tall and operated by three puppeteers, American ingenuity has upped the scale three times, and cut the number of puppeteers to two for each figure in the show. The production will give Detroit audiences the opportunity to see something unusual in the field of puppetry. Largely represented by hand puppets and marionettes, American audiences seldom see the Paladin rod puppets from Italy, shadow figures from the Orient and Asia, or the Bunraku figures, now a dying art even in Japan. There was another reason in creating puppets of such gigantic proportions. The conventional hand puppets and marionettes would have been too small a scale to match the size of the auditorium. These would have been visible to only about half the audience, so something special was

required.

Puppeteers who operate the figures will be dressed in black, wear black hoods, and create a special "cloak of invisibility." Although they can be distinguished behind the huge figures, the manipulators are soon forgotten in the excitement of the production itself. Through expert and deft manipulation they are able to make these giants of the puppet stage walk, sit, kneel, dance, point and even shoot in most convincing fashion.

The Detroit Puppet Theatre, which is made possible through a grant from the Detroit News, has taken an invigorating leadership in the field of puppetry, making possible an opportunity for creating a production of this scale which would be impossible or impractical for a private producer in the puppet theatre.

As the production goes into the final weeks of construction and rehearsal, director Latshaw has this to say of his work: "The impetus to be a puppeteer springs from the desire to create theatre in a special fashion, as dance, opera and mime create in their special fashions. I am excited over the new figures because of the wide range of movement and specific control which they afford. Never before has there been a puppet which could reflect so much of the specific intention of the puppeteer-actor handling it. Puppets create illusion and have a power in their impersonal quality, a quality which is unknown to actors. The scale of the figures conjures up something of the majesty of the Greeks, created in their theatre with the large masks and built up sandals of their actors. Because of the clarity required by pantomime, these puppets are particularly well suited to their roles."

## ***Festival at Chapel Hill Aug. 4-9***

# Festival at Chapel Hill

George Merten

## A Festival at Popular Prices

Now that you have made up your mind to be at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for the 1958 Festival, during the week of August 4, you are probably anxious to know what it is going to cost. Remarkably little, for a full week of fun and profitable experience. Although most commodities in the nation have soared in price, this year's Festival will, if anything, be a little cheaper than usual.

### Rooms

Cobb Dormitory will be the principal residence building and the rates are as follows:

Single room: \$2.75 per day or \$12.00 per week.

Double room: \$2.00 per day each person or \$8.00 per week each person. It might be to your advantage, if you are staying less than a week, to pay the weekly rate. Work it out on the above scale.

Linen and towels are furnished.

### Meals

Meals will be served at the Lenoir Cafeteria, unless you wish to eat at the Carolina Inn or off-campus. I have it on good authority that food is both good and cheap, and that the heartiest eaters will fare exceedingly well on \$3.00 a day.

### Registration Fees

Festival registration will be maintained at \$10.00, the fee for the last two years.

Workshop registration, as last year will be \$5.00 and will include a manual of notes on the demonstrations.

### Registration

Included in the next issue of the JOURNAL will be all the registration

cards you will need for the Festival, including exhibit cards, etc. It will be wise to send in the registration cards as soon as you receive the June JOURNAL, in order that you may secure the accomodation you desire. It will also be an immense help to the committee that handle this part of the Festival organization.

### Extras

Free parking will be provided by the University on all parts of the campus.

A large tiled swimming pool is available for the small sum of \$1.00 per week.

There is a nursery available and baby sitting can probably be arranged.

### Later

The next JOURNAL will give you traveling directions from Durham for those who do not travel in their own car.

Program outline will also be available in same issue.

### Store

The Store will again be available to those who wish to buy or sell. Start planning now to bring that surplus material to the Store. Write Vivian Michael if you need any advice about this.

## POT POURRI

Bruce Bucknell — Chairman

How many times have you remarked as you viewed a Festival production, "I could do as well as that?"

Here is your Golden Opportunity to show what you do have and just how well you can do it. It will not be possible for every volunteer to do a whole show on the Pot Pourri, your act must be limited to a scene or a

couple snappy variety numbers that you feel have a special appeal. The idea of the Pot Pourri is to give folks who have been spectators in the past an opportunity to present their acts to the P of A membership.

Planning a Festival Program is always a difficult job for the program Chairman. Who knows . . . maybe your act will plant a seed in his mind for future Festivals . . . he is always on the lookout for new talent.

This is a personal invitation to send me a note, telling me in detail what kind of an act you have, and we will arrange as many acts as possible for the Pot Pourri. This is a departure

from former procedure . . . when acts were scheduled at the last minute or appeared without scheduling on a minutes notice. It is an endeavor to raise the quality of the Pot Pourri, and make it a more pleasurable program for all concerned.

Won't you accept my invitation and drop me a note as soon as possible giving details of your act. The success of the Pot Pourri depends upon you!

Write:

**Bruce Bucknell**  
519 30th St., S. E.  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

## Summer in Europe

Alfred Wallace

**Note:** Altho Alfred warned us ahead of time that his trip to Europe was purely a "vacation" tour, his first in years, and that the main object of the trip was to enjoy the beauties of the old country with his wife, we knew he'd find time to hunt up a few puppet shows. Our prophecy was right! This letter was received recently.

This note is long overdue. Last spring I promised to send you some notes on what I saw in Europe of puppet activity. I could say that my work, since I returned in August, has kept me busy but that would only be partly true. Then I could confess to the pleasant fault of being an extravagant procrastinator which would also be partly true. The main reason for not reporting on French and Italian puppetry is that I found nothing worth reporting.

In spite of the fact that in the two brief weeks we had in Paris, I was more interested in showing my wife, Adelaide, this beautiful city, recapturing some of my own past through some friends, and attending to some business

I had, I did make an effort to see puppet things. There was a show at Aux Printemps, a department store, which was as run-of-the mill as one could find on either side of the ocean. It was amusing that the theme of the show had to do with a French boy traveling across United States and his unfunny encounters with cowboys, Indians, juvenile delinquents and gangsters. My judgement of the humor of this performance was not based on my weak French but on the children's reactions. There were forty or fifty children attending this show. Technically, this puppet group was as good as any Cub Scout group you can find in Columbus. In order to maintain what is left of our national relations with France, which, at the moment seems depressingly strained, I must diplomatically refrain from mentioning the name of this puppet group.

After a most exhilarating rainy morning at the Louvre one day we limped across the Tuilleries Gardens to the puppet show there. A. M. Audre Fauron was doing a series of one man shows in an outdoor pavilion.



The performances were given twice on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and three times on Saturday and Sunday. The theatre is housed in a simple wooden framed building equipped with storage space for several shows for the needs of the repertory—four or five different plays, I think, and space to fly the backgrounds which are simply painted. A reflectored electric bulb and an unpleasantly poor sound amplifier for a microphone completed the accouterments. The expectant young audience was sheltered under a canvas awning. The whole structure is fenced in with shurbbery so that unpaid hangers-on cannot distrub the forty odd capacity audience.

The shows have a slapdash bravura of a Punch show perfectly suited to a group of young children and their entranced manner, alternating with squeals and laughter, proved it. The jokes were local and simple but the plays revolved on the subject of manners and customs of the late nineteenth century. The hero reminded me a good deal of La Fleur, a country bumpkin on a visit to the big city of Paris. He was very familiar to the children. The hero's interplay and conversation with the audience was the best part of the shows for me. The puppets and props were roughly made and sturdy to survive the bold, broad manipulation. There were no subtleties in the performances but it didn't seem to be necessary. Oh, Gee, I almost forgot. The department store puppets were marionettes and this park show used hand puppets. These performances are sponsored by the city and run through the summer months between the school sessions. Though I tried, I couldn't get more specific information about which city department did what and for how much. The explanations were much too quickly spoken for my untrained ear. Andre Fauron speaks no English and had saintly patience with my compound fractured French. (Oh, if only I could repeat

my school days.) In M. Fauron's guest book I noticed several Americans whom I didn't know and Fern Zwicky and the Gilmores whom I did, of course. On another day on a stroll along Boulevard Saint Michel, absorbing the sights and sounds in the heart of the Left Bank, we went to see the puppet show in the Luxembourg Gardens.

The little theatre in the Luxembourg Gardens is set among some trees near a playground area. It looked like a "functional modern" building in the 1930 style. The "box office" at one side houses a formidable frowning woman who collects forty francs from children and seventy francs from adults. (That's about 10 cents and 17 cents). Inside, the seating on wooden benches and folding chairs is arranged so that the children sit down front and the adults, made up of a few tourists, fathers on their off day, harassed mothers not free for the day and nursemaids (I suspect that there were a few aunts and cousins, too) were allowed to sit or stand in the spaces not used for the children. How loving and thoughtful! How charming and civilized! I can remember seeing zealous bulky matrons rush down with their overfed young relatives to the choice front seats to block the view of three of four defenseless skinny kids behind, at performances I've attended in our country. The scowler who takes tickets also pulls side wall curtains to darken the house, helps the two women ushers keep peace and quiet before the show starts and during intermission. The three witches skillfully float through the audience between acts selling bonbons, tepid counterparts of our soda pop and to my popeyed amazement, an American drink, known universally as the one that "refreshes." (No commercials in this note). The play I saw was called a "Spectacle," I guess because it was a continuous play straight through, instead of excerpts and for variety. With a bit of mental acro-



batics and considerable deduction, I was able to translate the title as "Little Red Riding Hood." Red (Fouge) was the keyword which gave away the deception. It was an original and a contemporary version of the old whiz. The hand puppet performance was excellently done. The wit and humor of the play was easily understood, even by the few foreigners in the audience. The sets, props and puppets were executed on a high standard which has made the group of Robert Desarthis internationally known, since 1933. I cannot add anything to the description of the work of Desarthis which has not been said in a more enthusiastic manner in the many international publications which include French Puppetry.

In Venice, we were much too overwhelmed by the romantic fantasy of that city, to think of looking for or at puppet shows with a critical eye when we felt as though we were part of a Fairy tale, — a dreamlike pantomime. My queries about puppets in Venice and Florence were answered with a blank stare or a negative shrug. In Florence the results of cultural revival five and six hundred years ago are displayed as obviously as possible to the tourists. This is a city of tradesmen and craftsmen who work at a furious rate to supply the traveling souvenir collector with cheap imitations of their potentially fine work. When I return for a more leisurely look at the glorious David of Michelangelo and the other magnificents of the Pitti and Uffizi galleries, I may avoid the summer-resort-convention-time feeling of the city by timing my visit in the Spring or Fall, instead of the summer. Maybe then I will find puppets there, too.

In Rome our business involvements and an active social life needed all our strength and concentration left over from our efforts to keep a little cooler than the 95 and 99 degree heat of the city when we were there. A long lunch and siesta period between noon

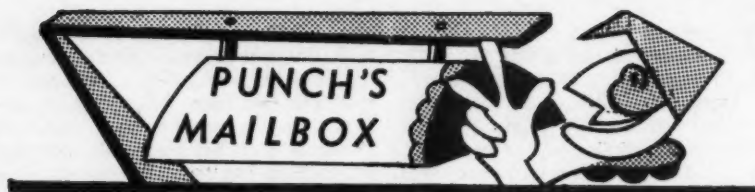
and four P. M. each day hampered our activities, but it was a sensible custom to avoid the worst heat of the day. I was told that there was a mobile puppet show "sometimes" in the Villa Borghese and that occasional showmen set up their booths in the streets in the newer residential districts of Rome. Since there was no schedule for these shows, it wasn't possible to fit them into our busy and enervating days. Looking through back issues of local magazines and newspapers, I did notice announcements of puppet shows given in theatres in Rome. It seems that in the summer time these companies leave Rome to avoid the tourists. Ha! Occasionally I did see a Sicilian marionette in a window display which seems to indicate that puppetry is still contemporary there.

Wherever we travelled in France and Italy the only local people who remained to brave the uncomfortable weather and the tourists were those who earned their living directly from traveling Americans, English, Germans or Scandinavians. Everyone else ran to the hills or to seaside places as any sensible person would, during vacation time.

Perhaps, during a proper season, I could have seen more puppet things but I suspect that my reactions would be the same. At the risk of mistakenly giving the impression of being nationalistic, I think American puppetry is as good and as bad as one can find anywhere in any country.

I'm sure that this will be useless to you for the Journal but since I promised to report, a promise is a promise, even a late one.

I'm sure that you will understand my preoccupation with other aspects of a trip to Europe full of art, music, customs and people with whom I am less familiar than I am with puppets. I've lived with puppets for twenty years and perhaps I would have preferred that much time spent in Europe.



Punch has moved his mailbox address. Please note and send your news to him care of this new off-Broadway address! We'll be happy to receive every item as long as it's about you or from you about puppetry. Rod is "on the road" now, touring the N. Y. — N. J. area currently performing his version of "The Elephant's Child." It will be on the Festival program at Chapel Hill. Will you be there too?

In case you haven't, by all means see the film "Sayanora." The Japanese puppet theatre sequences are delightful.

New officers of the yet unofficial San Diego County Puppet Guild include Richard Kelley, President; Ed Churchman, Vice President; Duane Gerde, Claire Goldsmith, Publicity; Pat Platt, Secretary and Mary Gerde, Treasurer. At the Kelley's Christmas party meeting they were all entertained by Nick Hoffa and his singing cowboy number and a clever puppet pantomime by Tracy King. Ed Churchman brought down the house with a wonderful Litterbug made of newspapers, paper cups and other trash. Kay Kitchen and Duane Gerde performed and Claire Goldsmith read. The January meeting featured a demonstration by Goldie Chambers on puppet heads from wood dough. The February meeting included a tape demonstration by Gen Engman at her home.

The Padre Puppeteers, send clippings indicating their fine approach towards puppet activity in the San Diego area. Genevieve Engman makes the puppets and costumes while Marie

Hitchcock handles strings and writes the plays. Dialogue is taped and often featured are the voices of the Engman children, Elaine, 12, and Patsy, 8. From the Richard Kelley's comes their interesting brochure describing their current "Lad Who Went to the North Wind." The Kelley's have been writing and producing puppet shows and children's plays for twenty years and they do a 25 minute version of their show for Primary grades, a 45 minute version for intermediate grades.

Council member Vernone Tracey has moved to 1223 Glynn, Detroit 2, Michigan. Pvt. Jim Menke has moved into the army, where he hopes to utilize his puppet talents and is planning a touring "Sleeping Beauty" after his current two year tour of duty. Pvt. Tony Urbano is biding his time with Uncle Sam planning a new fairy tale operetta adapted from the "Blue Parrot." His time will be up soon and the new show is liable to be another Urbano extravaganza type smash hit.

Smashing through on color TV from Chicago, "The Blue Fairy," WGN-TV 15 minute daily show by Rufus Rose, premiered Feb. 17 doing "Pinocchio." Martin Stevens writes the scripts, the producer and director are Urbach and Kane, sponsors are RCA and the local Polk Brothers, puppeteers are Rufus, Margo, and George Nelle with Jim Rose filling in for Rufus on Fridays when Rufie flies to N. Y. to do "Howdy Doody" on Saturday. Hope you saw Burr on the Polly Bergen Show. Understand he's doing some commercials says Fran.

Sleeve puppets with colorfully

painted heads and long knit sleeve bodies designed by Bil Baird are available in three versions at \$1.00 each from S. S. Kresge Stores, NYC. The "Bilygoons" are a Gooney Bird, Dragon and Alligator.

Lea and Gia Wallace were in Mexico till March 15, back in N. Y. then to their Village Dance and Puppet Center. Betty Percy Putt, with her architect husband, Tony, is cooking up puppet plans in NYC. Roy Etherington will be touring "Beauty and the Beast" next year in Ohio and North Dakota. Phil Molby plans to tour "Toby Tyler." Fay Coleman is currently doing a one man marionette show, "The Enchanted Dog," a Japanese legend. Word from Suzari's boss, Dorothy Zaconick, tells their current "road show" to be "Jack and the Beanstalk" traveling in a new car.

We heard from them for the first time and their names are Lee McFadden and Dick Hawley, young puppet showmen from Dallas, Texas. They've been showing for about five years and their current "Around the World" theme show has caused quite a clamor in the Texas press. Another young showman, Bob Brown, who used to be Bob Braun for your information, seems to be hitting various touring trails. Currently, he and Leonard Piper of N. J. are touring Wisconsin for the Evans Webb Marionette Theatre of N. Y. Ordinarily, Leonard and Bob are the "Piper Puppets" and when they bumped into the Piper Puppets, Mr. and Mrs. Richard same, of Superior, Wisconsin, a good time was had by all, although Kathy wasn't there.

Cedric Head seems to be getting around. Bob Brown writes of bumping into him and Pat Blackwood while they were on tour out west. Along comes a letter from Ruth Gilpin, at work doing a "single" act in the Columbus, Ohio, area. The Gilpin Marionettes have a striking new brochure.

Soustegaard King, Phoenix, Arizona,

was for many years an inspiration to students as a leading dance instructor. Upon retiring from this art, she has found new inspiration in puppetry and at an age when most people are satisfied to sit back and "take it easy." Mrs. King is actively bringing to puppetry the same vitality and skill that she so ably displayed in the field of dancing.

San Francisco's educational TV station KQED has a children's hour that has so far featured a film by Tom Tichenor and a Junior League Group, "The Tales of Pointdexter." SCHOOL AND SOCIETY, an educational magazine, recently reported that "Louise Kingman, instructor of speech education, Boston University's School of Education, is using puppets and marionettes to correct speech handicaps among children. She points out that individuals, when speaking for a puppet . . . often forget their speech rhythm and speak adequately . . . Puppets, serving only as temporary 'crutches' are gradually discarded . . . and the individual, who has demonstrated that he can speak correctly, is aided in finding a permanent solution to his speech disorder."

Up at his Toy Cupboard Theatre and Museum, South Lancaster, Mass., Herb Hosmer is going strong. If you can suggest any sources for old and foreign puppets or modern foreign puppets and marionettes, why not drop Herb a line? If you are interested in the preservation and study of theatrical toys, write Herb for a brochure and discover all the goodies he has to offer.

Recently, when Dion Chesse, who plays the title role in his father's TV marionette production, "Brother Buzz," out in San Francisco, was laid low with the flu, his younger brother, Bruce took over for a show. Lettie Connell, of that fair city, is busy as Miss Busy Bee, buzzing in all kinds of puppet directions. Their Guild, which hopes soon to have a P of A charter, holds workshops and parties galore. Lettie and Bob Darling are all steamed up

over plans for "Beauty and the Beast" to be produced this summer for the Oakland Recreation Department's touring trailer theatre. In full swing are the puppets built by Marion Derby for Children's Fairyland, director, Dorothy Hayward, and her production of "Cinderella."

The Junior League of Springfield, Illinois, is planning shows in cooperation with the Illinois State Museum and are on the lookout for puppet manuscripts suitable for production of museum calibre. Can anyone help them? If so, write the Puppetry Chairman, 34 Virginia Lane, Springfield.

Blanding Sloan and Martha Armstrong have been making a series of plywood baby animal figures for a school in Van Nuys, California. The same team is working on a new Viewmaster, three reel series called "The Christmas Story." For Trueview, they have a one reeler called the "Littlest Snowman." Norma Coleman recently won a grand prize for her puppet routine in a variety program contest. The YMCA Junior Puppet Club of L. A. and director John Zweers have been getting helpful assists from Harry Burnett. The Yale puppeteer's newest venture, The Turnabout Tangleproof Puppet, an easily manipulated commercial puppet, sounds interesting.

Bob Baker and Alton Wood presented an hour and a half show for their friends, January 23rd, at the West Hollywood Playground. Their holiday show was presented to many audiences during the Christmas season and, since they are always up to something interesting, we'll be happy to hear what's new.

We'll be happy to hear what's new with you too. You are bound to have a good word or two to send us, haven't you? The address is new, and permanent for awhile. Mr. Punch's interest in reporting your news is always permanent. Write care of

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC for Sep-

tember pictured Punch and Judy trodding the boards for Turkish Masters. "Ancient Moslem law forbade the making of human images. Theologians exempted puppets, "killed" by perforations for manipulating the limbs. Children of Turkey delight in the antics of Karagoz, a rascally shadow puppet related to the Italian Punchinello. These two academy students practice with the Anglo-Saxon counterparts, Punch and Judy."

Among artists reported visiting London theatres with the Moscow State Variety Theatre were Mey and Divov, two puppeteers who appeared at the London Casino two years ago. WRCV TV puppeteer Lee Dexter was recently honored by being the first local TV personality to front the cover of the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER.

Many of the Recreation Departments around the country were wise enough to include puppetry in their planning. In the larger cities, with television station accessible, a good number of these local groups spent broadcasting time discussing and demonstrating the advantage of puppet and puppet plays to the recreational work of the community. Contrasting work is done with puppets in the two departments we can report on. In Richmond, Virginia, Puppetry Specialist Pat Steckman, former student of puppetry at the University of Richmond stressed creative work with children on playgrounds and parks within the city, culminating the work with "just for fun" shows given by the children. In Oakland, California, the Vagabond Puppet trailer which tours from park to park, presented a series of well designed and operated plays for children. Among the plays which are under the direction of Lettie Connell, new Council Member for P. of A., assisted by Jerry Juhl and Bob Darling, were "Red Riding Hood" presented with hand puppets and "The Pied Piper" presented with marionettes. Whether for children or by children, puppetry

is an excellent recreational medium.

P.T.A. groups are active with puppetry occasionally around the country. We have a clipping and photo of a show presented by the Shaw Ave. School P.T.A., Valley Stream, Long Island. Please send on your local news from group as well as self activity for future report. For instance, current show by the Junior League of Wichita, Kansas, is "Storm Along and The Great White Whale," but our source of information wasn't even Kansas.

Fifty cents and a Wheaties boxtop

could bring you "Champy" or "Mr. Fox" hand puppets. "Hudsonettes" are sets of cardboard finger puppets found, complete with script, on boxes of Hudson Paper Napkins. The Museum of the City of New York offered a summer exhibit of toy theatres from the collection of actor Alfred Lunt.

Rod Young

Box 313

Midtown Station

N. Y. 18, N. Y.

## New Membership Honor Roll

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